

WCES-2011

The Relationship Between Coping Strategies, Goal Setting And Competitive Anxiety With Athletic Performance Of The Students In Single And Group Teams

S.NSajadi(Ph.D)¹, Sogra KhanMohamadi(M.S)², Shahram Eskandari(M.A)³, Akbar

Heidary(M.A)⁴, Hossein Darbani(M.A)⁵

²Zanjan University

^{4,1}:university of Tehran,

³,Tarbiat Moalem university;

⁴,Gilan universty

Abstract

The present study considers the relationship between coping strategies, goal-setting and competitive anxiety with athletic performance of the students in single and group teams.

The subjects were 170 boys selected at random out of high school students in 2008-2009. To gather the data, we conducted coping strategies in sport, goal setting and competitive anxiety questionnaires as well as athletic performance checklist.

The results show that there was a significant relationship between task-based coping strategies with athletic performance of the students in group teams ($r=0.23$)

Key words: coping strategies, goal setting, competitive anxiety

© 2011 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades sport psychology has contributed to the performance of elite athletes through the implementation and practice of psychological methods – techniques such as: relaxation, goal-setting, mental rehearsal and visualization, and self-talk. For the most part, this focus on psychological methods has been more widely considered by examining psychological skills derived from various personality traits and psychological dispositions of elite athletes. There has been a great deal of interest in understanding the relationship of personality variables to sports performance, and the bulk of the quantitative research literature has identified a cluster of six broad psychological skill areas linked to effective performance. These include: motivation, self-confidence, arousal and activation, concentration and attentional control, regulation of stress, and coping with adversity (Hardy, Jones & Gould, 1996 (1)). Sport competition is well known for placing extremely high demands on athletes. Frequently, outcomes for these contests are decided by minute differences in preparation and skill between the competitors. Sport competition has become so important in today's society that extremely lofty expectations by others are placed on competing athletes regardless of competitors' abilities, reasons for participation, and skill levels. These types of conditions place high stress loads on the individuals who are competing. The stress presented in competition usually elicits competitive anxiety in athletes, providing an additional element for them to manage. When anxiety is not managed or interpreted correctly, athletes lose control and performance levels decrease (Hardy & Fazey, 1987; Martens, Burton, & Vealey, 1990). Therefore,

both researchers and practitioners in sport psychology are interested in furthering knowledge about competitive anxiety and its influence on athletes.

Competitive anxiety is been one of the most thoroughly examined topics in sport psychology literature. This is mainly due to the perceived detrimental effects anxiety has on performance, creating the negative view most individuals hold of this concept. Anxiety is defined as feelings of nervousness and tension resulting from environmental demands that are associated with arousal. These demands are usually stressful, indicating to the athletes a perception of imbalance between the demand given and their abilities to fulfill the demand (Gould, Greenleaf, & Krane, 2002)(2)

According to research done by Giacobbi and Weinberg (2000), adopted coping strategies have a strong relationship to performance. Moreover, Hanin (2000) states that *“Emotions influence performance process and the ongoing performance process strongly impacts emotion content and intensity.”* (p.174). Furthermore Crocker and Graham (1995) found a relationship between coping and effect. These three statements indicate that there could be much to be gained for sport and sportsmen if more research would be done in this research area. If working sport psychologists could, in a better way than today, describe, explain, predict and help athletes to control their coping behaviour, there is the possibility that peak performance could be reached on a more frequent basis. The research area of coping with success and failure has been studied by Conroy, Poczwadowski and Henschen (2001). Their study was conducted by interviewing 16 elite athletes and performance artists with the purpose to shed light on the cognitive- motivational- relational appraisals that were associated with fear of success and fear of failure(3)

2-Methodology

There were 170 students(85 team athletes-85 individual athletes)took part in the study. The participants were selected among high school athletes in 2008-9.To gather the data, we conducted coping strategies in sport, goal orientation ,competitive anxiety questionnaires as well as athletic performance checklist.

3-Findings

The results showed:

There was a significant relationship between coping strategies in terms of athletic performance in team athletes($r=0.23$).Also, the strongest predictors of the individual and team athletic performance were goal orientation and competitive anxiety ,respectively.

4-Recommendations

There should be special attention paid to training on task-based coping strategies, competitive anxiety reduction skills and task-based goal orientation.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the head of Zanjan-based basketball board for their generous and comprehensive support of the project

References

1. Newman Martyn(Ph.D).Emotional intelligence sports inventory. Technical paper(2010).
2. Aufenanger Sharyn j. Relationships between mental skills and competitive anxiety interpretation in open skill and close skill athletes .M.S thesis.Miami university(2005)
3. Höskolan i Halmstad ,Daniel Haglind. Coping with success and failure – Among Swedish and Portuguese track and field athletes and coaches School of social and behavioural science. Sport and exercise psychology 61-80p.